

Northbrook, Ill. - U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) today released the following statement on the death of Chairman Tom Lantos (D-Calif.):

“Chairman Lantos founded the human rights movement in the Congress with my predecessor John Porter of Illinois. Thousands of prisoners of conscience from the Soviet Union to China to a number of developing countries around the world owe their freedom to Tom Lantos.

“He was one of the most effective voices for a foreign policy of the United States where partisanship stops at the water’s edge. His loss creates an enormous gap in the fight to advance our basic values throughout the world.

“I have worked with Tom and Annette for 24 years and I will miss him greatly.”

In the 1980s, Lantos and U.S. Rep. John Porter (R-Ill.) co-founded the Human Rights Caucus. Kirk served as Porter’s lead staff for the Caucus and later became his Chief of Staff. As a member of Congress, Kirk continued his work with Lantos, serving as his co-chair on the Congressional Task Force Against Anti-Semitism.